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e - w o R K/W I R

THE NEWSLETTER FOR

VALLEY EXECUTIVES

Taking the Virtual Office to a New Level

e-workwire will show you ways to get your company working smarter. Operations of all types and sizes have benefited from telework. Here's another success story:

Sechler CPA

After the birth of her daughter 16 years ago, Carolyn Sechler convinced her managers to allow her to telecommute for the first six weeks, then on a continual basis. The schedule worked out productively for both parties.

Later, while writing several stories for professional publications on some of her visions for the industry, particularly on the concept of virtual offices, Sechler left her firm to start her own

virtual office accounting firm.

After consulting with the Regional Public Transportation Authority and doing some research on the Web, Sechler began her virtual undertaking. Sechler CPA started its virtual office in 1997 with two employees.

Early on, the trickiest part for Sechler was explaining clearly to clients that it was a choice, not a necessity. Eventually the clients caught on, and they now ask Sechler how they can get started in a telecommuting program or how to set up a virtual office.

Sechler CPA employees meet face-toface once a week for a staff meeting. This is a new employee's chance to meet the team and ask questions. In addition, everyone communicates via the Internet. Employee evaluations are very open and all employees participate. Sechler CPA has a core staff of five that develop telework guidelines and policies as needed.

As with all telecommuting programs, a virtual office is not for everyone. In Sechler's case, administrative staff have had the hardest time adapting because they are used to more supervision. Overall, the program has been very successful. With more than 10 employees, and morale at an all-time high, Sechler is considered a trailblazer in her industry.

(see "Sechler," Pg. 2)



Sechler

(continued from pg. 1)

Sechler CPA saves thousands of dollars each year in facility costs and continually recruits and retains top talent. It enjoys creativity beyond any imagined. Productivity has increased and employees are experiencing a closeness and availability to their families that many office workers don't. The virtual office has been a distinct advantage for Sechler CPA.

Available now:

ffering instruction on everything from fax machines and phone lines to dial-up connections, the RPTA's Connectivity Guide is a must read for anyone interested in telework. To receive your copy, call (602) 262-7433.

TELEWORK "DRIVERS" AND "BENEFITS" -

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

ometimes those who implement telework programs are unclear of the definition between the "drivers" of telework programs and the "benefits" of telework programs. The difference between drivers and benefits begins with their timing. The impact of telework drivers *precedes* program implementation, whereas the impact of benefits *results* from implementation. There is clearly an overlap to some degree.

The need for and expectations of certain benefits can also be drivers. Recently, the increased need to be more competitive in recruiting and retaining high tech workers has become a driver for telework. The benefits of improved quality of life have been highly touted by teleworkers. Following is a sampling of telework drivers and benefits.

Telework Drivers

- Advances in technology
- Changing worker values leading to

- more emphasis on balance between work and personal life, as well as reduced stress
- Environmental concerns/air quality/traffic congestion
- Organizational pressures to be more competitive, to reduce operating costs, and to improve ability to recruit and retain workers

Telework Benefits

- Improved quality of worklife: morale, stress, personal control, work/family/personal life balance, commute pressures
- Improved job performance: individual, organizational
- Improved ability to recruit and retain workers
- Environmental concerns/improved air quality/trip reduction
- Improved organizational cost efficiency: facility, health care, and other operating costs
- Improved management of human resources
- Improved customer service.

OSHA BACKS OFF ON TELEWORK

n February 25, 2000, in a new compliance directive issued to formalize agency policy about home-based work, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) confirmed that home offices will not be inspected for violations of federal safety and health rules.

The policy was first announced by OSHA Administrator Charles N. Jeffress in Congressional testimony prepared for delivery on January 25, 2000.

"OSHA respects the privacy of people's homes, and we expect that employers will too," said Jeffress.

The directive also states that employers are not liable for an

employee's home office. For more information or to view the directive and Jeffress' Congressional testimony, visit OSHA's web site at www.osha.gov. Copies of the directive can also be obtained from the agency's publications office by calling (202) 693-1888.

MPLOYEES WHO WORK AT HOME OFTEN HAVE HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY AND DEMONSTRATE A MORE EMPOWERED ATTITUDE. THE
COMPANY BENEFITS THROUGH LOWER FACILITY COSTS AND

FEWER OVERALL AUTOMOBILE TRIPS, THUS REDUCING AIR POLLUTION AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY."

Mike Vescuso, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, America West Airlines

Who's Getting to Work Smarter?

Have you ever been stuck in traffic at 6 p.m. wondering what you would be doing at that moment if you worked from home? Below is a mock comparison of a typical day in the life of a commuter and a teleworker. Decide which one is better for you.

	COMMUTER	
5:45 a.m.	Alarm goes off, hit snooze.	
6:00 a.m.	Shower, dress, read front page of paper.	ı
7:00 a.m.	Leave for work.	ı
7:03 a.m.	Dash back into house for forgotten meeting	ı
	papers.	ı
7:05 a.m.	Get back into car, begin commute.	ı
7:30 a.m.	Stop to get coffee.	ı
7:45 a.m.	Still commuting, traffic crawling due to accident	ı
	and onlookers - dull throbbing begins in head	ı
8:15 a.m.	Arrive at work – late.	h
8:40 a.m.	Break from water cooler chat to start computer,	ľ
	get messages.	П
12:00 p.m.	S C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C	ı
1:00 p.m.	Finishing up lunch (worry about making it back	Г
	to office on-time).	ı
1:30 p.m.	Unexpected meeting with co-worker.	ı
3:00 p.m.	Start on project due tomorrow.	P
4:35 p.m.	Wrapping up project, not finished.	ŀ
4:45 p.m.	Take project home.	
4:50 p.m.	Leave now to beat traffic.	١
5:05 p.m.	Not even to freeway yet.	N
5:30 p.m.	"Should have taken last exit."	r
5:45 p.m.	Headache begins; late to pick up kids.	ı
6:00 p.m.	Arrive home exhausted with kids starving.	ı
6:45 p.m.	Another macaroni & cheese dinner.	ı
7:00 p.m.	On couch	ı
	with cold	ı
	pack, feel	ı
	grumpy & tired.	ı
9:00 p.m.	Start work	ı
3.00 p.m.	that was	ı
	brought	ı
	home due to	ı
	distractions at work - brief break for kids' good	ı
	night hugs.	
10:00 p.m.		
20.00 p.m.	not finished.	

TELEWORKER

Sleep.	
6:25 a.m.	Alarm goes off.
6:30 a.m.	Shower; dress for home office, make coffee.
6:50 a.m.	Catch up on morning T.V. news, read paper.
7:05 a.m.	Lead East Coast conference call.
7:30 a.m.	Still on conference call.
7:45 a.m.	Wrapping up conference call.
8:00 a.m.	Start on project due tomorrow.
10:00 a.m.	Take break; catch up on phone calls and e-mails.



10:30 a.m.	Continue project.
12:30 p.m.	Break for lunch, take dog for walk, water lawn.
1:30 p.m.	Impromptu meeting with co-worker.
2:00 p.m.	Continue project.
3:30 p.m.	Finish to-do list, read industry publications.
5:00 p.m.	Take final phone call.
5:10 p.m.	Shut down computer. Start fresh tomorrow.

5:30 p.m.	Start dinner, visit with kids.
6:30 p.m.	Eat dinner.
7:00 p.m.	Catch up on spouse's day.
7:30 p.m.	Help kids with homework, relax.
8:30 p.m.	Tuck kids in – read favorite bedtime story.

Read good novel.

5:15 p.m. Pick up kids.

9:00 p.m.

10:00 p.m. Watch news.11:00 p.m. Asleep. Looking forward to the next productive telework day.

Getting the Right E C U P P M C N T S

AN ESSENTIAL PART OF GOOD TELEWORKING

elework isn't something employers and employees typically start doing overnight. Successful teleworking requires some thought and solid support. In addition to structure, teleworkers need some basic equipment including:

Basic Telework Equipment

- **▼** Computer
- **▼** Modem
- **▼** Printer
- ▼ Network/internet access
- ▼ Ergonomic work area

Supplementary Telework Equipment

- Fax Machine/Copier
- An additional telephone line or high speed access

Depending upon the occupation, some teleworkers may require specialized equipment.

or more information on telework call the Regional
Public Transportation Authority at (602) 262-7433
or visit the Valley Metro web site at
www.valleymetro.maricopa.gov.

Regional Public Transportation Authority

302 N. 1st. Ave., Suite 700. Phoenix, AZ 85003

Phone (602) 262-7433

elecommuting represents
a tremendous opportunity for businesses throughout the Valley and
our country to improve their
productivity and operating efficiency, while contributing to a
positive quality of life."
Gregg Holmes, Vice President and

Cananal Managar

Cox Communications

Funded by the Maricopa Association of Governments, with Federal Highway Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Funds.



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